

**U.S. Embassy Baku Chargé d’Affaires Adam Sterling**

Interview with Khazar TV

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**Q: A long time has passed and there is still no new US Ambassador to Azerbaijan. Do you think that pro-Armenian senators have prevented the appointment of a new Ambassador? When do you think this problem will be solved?**

A: Under the United States constitution, the President of the U.S. nominates an ambassador, but then that ambassadorial nominee has to be approved by the United States Senate. President Obama nominated Matthew Bryza earlier this year and the Senate still has to approve him. I can’t say when the Senate will take its action, because the Senate operates under its own timeline according to its own rules.

**Q: If the discussions will be prolonged, is it on the agenda to promote a new nominee?**

I can’t say anything about that. I don’t know what President Obama’s intentions are, but I can say that the administration strongly supports Mr. Bryza’s nomination.

**Q: Will the US make every effort to solve the Azerbaijan-Armenian NK conflict? As you know on the Russian initiative, there were a number of meetings of two countries presidents, but there haven’t been big results. Is the US going to show any initiatives in resolution of the NK conflict?**

A: The US is one of three Co-chairs of the Minsk Group, along with Russia and France and we are strongly committed to working with our Russian and French partners to find a resolution to the conflict. The US Co-chair, Ambassador Braedtker, has been very active working through the Minsk Group process.

**Q: Although there was a big hope for Astana summit, there weren’t many results. It even became complicated to adopt the final declaration. According to some sources the US and Russia did not agree with some parts of the document. How would you characterize this summit?**

Well, first of all the Astana summit did come out with a declaration that re-asserted the Helsinki principles as the basis of all the work the OSCE has done over the years. We regret that there was no Action Plan that came out of the Summit. That was due to differences that could not be resolved about protracted conflicts. Secretary of State Clinton stated the US position in her speech in Astana. At the same time, I have to say that my government is gratified that there was strong support expressed in Astana for the role of civil society throughout the Summit meeting. We believe that civil society is a key element to the promotion of democracy and human rights around the world, for which OSCE stands.

**Q: There are some news that as if the information from the meetings of US Embassy and Azerbaijani officials were placed at Wikileaks site. Would you clarify if these messages are correct or false?**

A: It's a matter of US government policy, we cannot comment on the authenticity or content of those messages that have been published. What I can say is that the United States Government strongly condemns the illegal release of these documents. As Secretary Clinton has said, the illegal release of these documents puts lives in danger, it threatens US national security interests, and it undermines the trust on which peaceful nations depend for the conduct of diplomacy.

If I could also say about the documents themselves, just so people understand what diplomatic cables are, as a general rule. Embassies send reports to capitals from all countries that reflect preliminary, on-the-spot assessments by diplomats. They do not represent the policy of governments. The policy, in the case of my government, comes from Washington.

**Q: Has the information that disclosed on the Wikileaks site had any impact on the foreign policy of the United States?**

Clearly these releases have created difficulties in confidence. Confidence and trust is the foundation of diplomatic relations between governments and we recognize that we have to restore the trust that was damaged by this incident. At the same time, the work of United States diplomacy is continuing. In Azerbaijan, for example, we have a number of important interests that the United States and Azerbaijan share, that our two governments have to work on and that we are continuing to work on.

**Q: I would like to touch upon US-Azerbaijani relations in the educational sphere and I would like to know, what type of projects are being implemented in this sphere?**

The United States supports Azerbaijani students studying in the United States at various different levels beginning in secondary schools, through university and beyond. We have a number of programs to send Azerbaijani students to the United States. At the same time, we have provided some support to the educational sector in Azerbaijan, notably through the construction of schools in villages throughout Azerbaijan.

And I would also say that, through the US Peace Corps program, there are a number, more than one hundred Peace Corps volunteers throughout Azerbaijan, many of whom are working in the schools, teaching English, organizing youth programs, and so forth.

**Q: In terms of the exchange of students, is there any programs at the university level?**

Yes, the Fulbright program for example, a very prestigious United States program around the world, sends Azerbaijani scholars to the United States and brings American scholars to Azerbaijan. We have a number of scholars currently in Azerbaijan with the Fulbright program.

**Q: I would like to touch upon US- Azerbaijan economic relations. What projects are currently underway?**

United States economic cooperation for Azerbaijan has been very active since Azerbaijan's independence. First of all, of course, the United States has long been a supporter of Azerbaijan's energy development and has worked with Azerbaijan to find, to export its energy.

At the same time, the United States supports the Government of Azerbaijan's goal to diversify the economy away from dependence from energy, energy development. And we have a number of programs throughout the economy to improve the business environment. We have supported lending to small and medium-sized businesses for example and other sectors, for example, agriculture. We've worked with the Government of Azerbaijan on laws to promote more favorable business environment and business climate.

**Q: I would like to talk about the Nabucco project. I would like to get your opinions how do you see the realization of the Nabucco project?**

The United States supports the concept of what we call the southern corridor export route for Azerbaijani gas. Nabucco is one of the projects that has been proposed to provide gas to Europe through the southern corridor. It is not the only project. In general, the decision about which project will provide southern corridor is a commercial decision and has to be based on commercial considerations.

**Q: How do you assess Azerbaijan's role in regional energy security?**

Azerbaijan has a very good reputation for many aspects of how it's protecting its own energy routes. The United States continues to work with Azerbaijan in protection of its energy resources.

**Q: I'd like to return to Nagorno-Karabakh. There are people who have been refugees for 18 years now. I would like to know how do you see the solution for this conflict and when do you think it will happen?**

The only solution will be a negotiated solution. There is no military option for solving Nagorno-Karabakh. That's why the United States, as one of the Co-Chairman of the Minsk Group process, is so actively involved in this. We know that that process is really emblematic of the only way to solve this conflict.

It is important to note that Presidents Aliyev and Sarkisian along with the three Minsk Group Co-Chairs reaffirmed the importance of the Minsk Group Process.

They recognized that the atmosphere between the parties needs to be improved, that a number of steps need to be taken

**Q: As you know as a result of the NK conflict there are over 1 million IDPs in Azerbaijan. After the Astana Summit, they have lost their trust in the peaceful resolution of this problem. What the Armenia side does, in order to drag the process out, in order to keep or**

**maintain the conflict in the frozen status. Given that, there is only one way for Azerbaijan to resolve this, and that is through war. What is your attitude to this?**

I can say that's not my understanding of what I have heard President Aliyev say. For example, I have heard him say that a negotiated solution is the desirable way out. The United States certainly believes that a negotiated solution is the only way to resolve the conflict.

[4 seconds Inaudible]... There are gaps in the process that, there have been dangerous incidents along the line of contact. We have to take steps to strengthen the ceasefire and to restore confidence so that the peace process can move forward.